

### Uncertainty and indeterminacy in Brazilian social and media formation: references to think of the problem of recognition in the public space

Ferreira, Jairo

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Ferreira, J. (2017). Uncertainty and indeterminacy in Brazilian social and media formation: references to think of the problem of recognition in the public space. *ESSACHESS - Journal for Communication Studies*, 10(1), 267-285. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-55485-7>

#### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/deed.de>

#### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY-NC Licence (Attribution-NonCommercial). For more Information see:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

# Uncertainty and indeterminacy in Brazilian social and media formation: references to think of the problem of recognition in the public space

Professor Jairo FERREIRA  
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos  
BRASIL  
Jferreira@unisinos.br

**Abstract:** In this article, we propose the concept of mediatization as central to understanding the processes of disruption, uncertainty, and indeterminacy in the social formation of Brazil. This proposition does not replace the socio-anthropological approaches that propose indeterminacy as a characteristic of societies where there are no social practices symbolically referenced (Lahire, 2002). We suggest, however, that this movement that we call ascending is reproduced in an exponential way, adding time and space deferred, due to the mediatization of society, in which the use of the media by social actors breaks with discursive hegemonies of media and mediated institutions. The mediatization is conceptualized in three spheres: a) the information flows between *Ecclesia*, *Agora*, and *Oikos* (Bratosin, 2014; Ferreira, 2016); b) the uses, practices, and appropriations of the means, especially in digital networks; c) circulation, central in the constitution flows. Circulation is not going from hand to hand. Circulation is the operation of picking up, manipulating, in the struggle for recognition, within the framework of flows. Therefore, circulation refers to the conflicts and possibilities of social recognition, triggered by actors and institutions, media and mediatized. We suggest, therefore, a new design for the understanding of the current symbolic tensions in Latin America, based on meta-reflections from its epistemologies.

**Keywords:** uncertainty, mediatization, means, circulation, recognition

\*\*\*

*Incertitude et indétermination dans la formation socio médiatique brésilienne : références pour réfléchir sur le problème de la reconnaissance de la violence symbolique et matérielle dans l'espace public*

**Résumé :** Dans cet article, nous proposons le concept de médiatisation comme élément central à la compréhension des processus de disruption, d'incertitude et d'indétermination dans la constitution sociale du Brésil. Cette proposition ne veut pas remplacer les approches socio-anthropologiques qui proposent l'indétermination comme la caractéristique des sociétés où il n'y a pas de pratiques sociales référencées symboliquement (Lahire, 2002). Néanmoins, l'article suggère que ce mouve-

ment que nous appelons ascendant est reproduit de manière exponentielle, réunissant temps et espaces diversifiés, en raison de la médiatisation de la société, dans laquelle l'usage des moyens de communication par des acteurs sociaux rompt avec des hégémonies discursives des institutions médiatiques et médiatisées. Le concept de médiatisation se déploie en trois sphères : a) les flux d'information entre *ecclesia*, *àgora* et *oikos* (Bratosin, 2014; Ferreira, 2016) ; b) les usages, pratiques et appropriations des moyens de communication, en particulier des réseaux numériques ; c) la circulation, centrale dans la constitution des flux. La circulation ne veut pas dire passer de main en main. La circulation est l'opération de saisir, manipuler dans la lutte pour reconnaissance au sein des flux. Par conséquent, la circulation fait référence à des conflits et à des possibilités de reconnaissance sociale, activés par des acteurs et des institutions, médiatiques et médiatisées. Il est donc proposé un nouveau design pour la compréhension des tensions symboliques actuelles en Amérique latine, à partir de métaréflexions, venant de leurs épistémologies respectives.

**Mots-clés :** incertitude, médiatisation, moyens, circulation, reconnaissance

\*\*\*

## Introduction

We can characterize the disruptive processes of indeterminacy and uncertainty in Brazilian society as ascendants and descendants. We call the ascending process what is characterized by its socio-anthropological and semiotic/technical constitution of origin (strong characteristics based on orality and pre-media visibility); the descending process is what is defined by the increasing mediatization, within a crisis of the hegemony of the cultural television, print-journalistic and radiophonic industry submerged today in the processes of interaction emerging from digital networks. These two processes - upward and downward - are producers of (semiotic) disruptions, in which unexpected meanings emerge on the social scene (to the polis that is constituted in media processes), without institutions and actors involved in media interactions being able to establish new systems of intelligibility that allow us to speak in a symbol that refers to the constitution of the mediatized public space. In this context, the strength of regulatory and control strategies is accelerated and symbolic and physical violence proliferate.

To think of the ascending processes, we mobilize the perspective of Lahire (2002). The Brazilian formation is close to the cases of "deviance and maladjustment" (Lahire, 2002) of the social world. We highlight some specific ones:

- a) ethical-cultural diversity without fixed hegemony;
- b) there is no stable political hegemony. On the contrary, political society is marked by strong historical transformations - populism, dictatorship, democracy, recent new configurations, in economics and politics;

c) deviations between dispositions and situations - the others in environments of others, etc. Illustration: proletarian and peasant origins in the historical formation of Brazil produce bizarre forms of distinction since the "dominant classes" carry marks of origin, diverse from the situations occupied in the contemporary;

d) there are no strong projects of an ethically purified Brazil; in the religious field, there is a profound transformation with the emergence of the new Charismatic Pentecostal movement.

In this singular society, the perspectives that analyze the practices lose their value in front of those that accentuate the mediations, the interactions, or, if we want, the circulation. These situations emphasize the importance of the present over the past, of interactions relative to contexts, of uses in relation to practices. A base is established in the real (ontological), which strengthens interactionist angles in the analysis of communication processes in Brazil. But does this mean that we have, in these situations, a symbolically referenced society that allows us to speak in public space?

The descending process is characterized by the transformation of the media interaction matrix. We will approach this matrix in the perspective of mediatization, in dialogue with the epistemologies from the South, especially Brazil and Argentina, in which the concept of circulation is central to understand the transit of the media processes from the so-called analogical to digital media. From this perspective, the concept of mediatization cannot be debited from research lineages based on production and/or reception processes. This debt, epistemologically, imprisons it, leading it to insuperable epistemological impasses in the context of the media processes in digital networks, from which they derive assertions that mediatization has come to an end.

From the ongoing transformations of the processes of mediatization and circulation in digital networks, we suggest that the problem of mutual recognition (established, in the case of Brazil, in the culture, according to the points mentioned above) gains visibility, not only reproductive but also disruptive, in so far as the previous forms of regulation (social/symbolic/discursive, distributed in devices) are questioned by the interactions marked by indeterminacy and uncertainties.

### **1. The informational and discursive flow in new media processes: the flow between Oikos, Ecclesia, and Agora**

In this section, we characterize what is, in our perspective, the private space (Oikos) and the public space (Agora). We argue that this bipartition is not complete. There is the space of institutions (the Ecclesia, as Bratosin says<sup>1</sup>, 2014). The communication processes in each of these three spaces have their specificities. This is an object of the field of communication, but mediatization focuses on the flows bet-

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed presentation of Ecclesia, Agora and Oikos, and their relations see the Bratosin's cited article.

ween the three spaces, considering uses, practices, and appropriations of the media, in the struggle for exoteric recognition (that is, the recognition that is performed in what is in the exogenous environment as in the specific space).

In media processes, the interactions between three spaces take place in circuit-environments, where different media are 'inhabited' by agents, whether institutional or not, media or not. The ambient circuits are not homogeneous. But in its scopes, one can observe the tension between three logics of the media processes: the disruptive processes, the regulations and new forms of intelligibility. The semiosis is diverse according to the space in which the operations are developed and their achievements.

The semiosis that emerges from the private space (Oikos) are disruptive, fragmented. This process can be historical. They are nourished by emotions and energies, often repressed or emphasized. Today, however, they offer possibilities for new intelligibility (extremity, the social construction of the self, socio-political activism and amateurs), which update previous forms of interaction between social agents and institutions. From these updates, they often derive new socio-institutional relationships with their internal and external public. When in collectives, the concept of self-organization is more pertinent to the understanding of a semiosis that is done by free association. However, from private spaces also emerge processes of disruptive semiosis and/or subordination to the regulatory processes triggered by institutions.

The institutions (media and mediatized) trigger, by excellence, the processes of production marked strategically, in the search of the regulation. This process is not linear, as reception studies have always accentuated, especially when in the space of the Agora there is, as the first moment of reception, the possibility of the reconstruction of intelligibility by the Interagents. This occurs whenever there is a social response process (Braga, 2006) to the institutions' offerings, be it media or mediatized, in which one can observe a return to the problematic of the semiosis emerging from the space of the Oikos, by the usages of the media, by the operations and achievements in the pursuit of recognition. However, this place of productive reception is often regulated, so that certain circuits capture participation and gratuitousness for the production of meaning that strengthens the institutions (the self-strengthening of the system, as characterized by Luhmann, 2005). Or, as has already been said, one observes strongly disruptive processes (the symptom is, especially, the non-recognition in the interlocutions among the Interagents), in which the leftovers of meaning manifest themselves endogenously or exogenously to the media processes, generating emotions and energies, indetermination and uncertainty.

Synthetically, in speaking in Oikos, Ecclesia, and Agora we are successively emphasizing the emotional-energetic dimension, institutionalizing and mercantile in the social topology of flows. When we talk about media and media institutions, we are accentuating the institutional aspect of media appropriation, whether it is specifically media (which gives form to organizations whose ends are media) or mediatized

(which gives form to organizations whose ends are not media). Linking both topics, it can be said that the Ecclesiae are institutions (media or mediatized) that compete in the space of Agoraes, aiming to mobilize emotions and energies always accumulated in the Oikoi. These energies and emotions are the ones that move the media machines, as we will see hereafter.

This general flow is socio-anthropological. Historical differentiation produces it. Thus, the classical differentiation between the Oikos and the polis, and also the differentiation of this between the Ecclesia and the Agora. We can situate there the historical antecedents of mediatization. Not surprisingly, in antiquity, the species becomes aware of differentiation, especially with the rhetoric of Aristotle, when he differentiates forms, strategies, and reception, linked to social and institutional classes in creation and differentiation. Here, rhetoric is the medium, mediator of relations between historically differentiated social spaces.

Therefore, this flow between Oikos, Agora, and Ecclesia is not enough to characterize the circulation in media processes. This flow characterizes a macro-social process, in which institutions, media and mediatized, and Interagents in interlocution, with mutual recognition or not, corresponding to what Verón (1997) diagrammed as flows between institutions, actors, and means. We have already spoken of the institutions (Ecclesiae); of the actors, considered as Interagents<sup>2</sup>, also, situating them in the Oikoi; we lack situating the means, mediators of flows. From another perspective, we design the socio-anthropological flows that support the processes of mediatization. We are now moving towards the media in order to, then, end the communication problem.

## 2. From the means to the circuits

The ideology, in the field of communication, overestimated the technical and technological means. Naturalization compatible with the political, cultural, and economic sources that funded communication research in the United States, including the formation of its first Ph.D. programs. This ideology contaminated the field of communication. The studies of media effects and the corresponding model (emitter-medium-message), in this sense, are relevant with strategic games. Even cybernetics is also based on the perspective of regulation. In short, a field of knowledge coupled to and driven by the space of the Ecclesia. The interactionist school, linked to upward pedagogies, was defeated at this same historical moment (Proulx, 2016).

This is not our proposal when we talk about means. Without excluding technique and technology, we propose that the media also include social signs, discourses, languages, and symbols (Ferreira, 201x). The means are historical and socially ap-

---

<sup>2</sup> The substitution of the term actor by the interacting agent is conceptual. Now, it is pertinent with the uses. Agent, with the practices. Interagents, we suggest, are agents in interaction, from the uses.

propriated by the institutions, even if they constitute institutions. It is, therefore, a demarcated process. This appropriation is central to the theories of communication. The division - also ideological - between producers and recipients is only an unfolding of these historical and social conditions and demarcates another epistemological direction.

### 3. Of what means do we speak about?

Semiotic/technical/social media are not always media. They will be media when they fulfill other conditions:

- e) When it is mediation between three spaces - the Oikos (private space) and the polis (being distributed between the Agora – space market of everything - and Ecclesia - specific market space, distributed between exoteric and esoteric symbolic).
- f) It is not restricted to the private space (Oikos) or institutional (Ecclesia), and, in this sense, the telephone is not media, although it is a means of communication. A cell phone will be media driven when used to trigger public messages on Facebook or other application, etc.
- g) The Agora is a space of conversation among all.
- h) The Ecclesia is the differentiated place/space, which institutes in the constitution of public. The Ecclesia acts in the Agora spaces, aiming at even the necessary participation of the Interagents immersed in Oikos.
- i) The media are also mediators of time and space, in a deferred way.

Having made this definition of media, we want to highlight its place as a means object symbolic. The media is an object, but social interactions must immediately produce it as a means for it to take its place in the media processes.

This transformation is central. It is not, as common sense says, to transform it into an instrument for the realization of an end. This formulation is unfolding of the ideology of the means. Pedagogically, to differentiate object and means, I suggest thinking about the smoke. It is itself an object. It turns into the medium when it is a sign of fire. In this sense, it is a means of communication. When used as a code (through tufts of smokes, more systematic or less systematic), the object becomes symbols.

In this sense, the instrumental function of the social/semiotic/technical means is subsumed in another: that of being a means icon mediator of social interactions. Without this place first, the media means object does not articulate itself as a symbolic object that triggers it, of interactions mediated between the Ecclesia, Oikos and the polis. If it does not consolidate, there are not enough practices to transform it into a means device, and we would not have the Ecclesiae and its public. This incor-

poration of means into social practices requires this transformation of technical objects into symbols (social codifications) of social interactions.

Thus, the medium is acted by the symbolic means, downstream and upstream (it may be not only love but also hatred, not only recognition but also contempt, etc.). It is this medium that activates a set of metaphors at play in relations, which, then, can be referred to as technical and technological means.

Condensing iconic and symbolic force mediating interactions, the means objects are socially disputed. It is an incessant struggle for access, uses, practices and appropriations. This access is not smooth. It is part of a social conflict. This course was consolidated by us in a book article organized with Serge Proulx (2016). This researcher offers us at least four conceptual categories to think about the social struggle through the means, when inserted in social processes: a) access; b) uses and applications of technique and technology, which articulates with the reflection on communicational objects; c) practices; d) appropriations (this category appears both in the discussion of reception and on technical means). These four conceptual categories are related to differentiated lineages of research. Access uses, applications, practices, and appropriations refer to the technical (or material) object. Appropriations refer to the language. In our formulation, we suggest articulating both processes.

On the uses, I remember here an anthropological museum in Geneva. A photo in which "Indians" of a tribe use the comb as an ornament on one side, and a small mirror, hanging from the hair, on the other. It is not the technique and the technology that defines the usage, therefore. There is a place of iconic-symbolic representation, which anticipates its (functional) technical and technological use, which make up, with its place of object-sign, the materiality of the means.

The questions raised about access, usage, applications, practice and appropriations must therefore refer to each of the means designated (the sign, technology and technique, the social/symbolic symbol), but also to its matrix deployments, in which one activates the other, in a coupled way or in its layered overlapping slides, which produce unexpected meanings. There is coupling when it is possible to translate logics (example: between the algorithm and the image), but there is no coupling between music and image.

These two records are untranslatable. They demand, therefore, musicality, rhythm, harmony and melody, to be juxtaposed and, perhaps, to slide one over another, into new symphonies. A good experience to understand the sliding is to listen to a movie, with a dense soundtrack, with an unknown narrative. The researcher should note what he imagines to be the narrative. Once this is done, he could return to see and check the correlation between the verbal-imaginary narrative and the one that composed with the sounds. There is, of course, a memory about the means movie, which allows him to find many coincidences, for it reports to it when he narrates the story blindly. But, certainly, there will be many points of mismatch. They are symptoms of the sliding.



Yet the couplings are observed especially in digital media. All other media can be translated into digital algorithms. In this sense, one can speak of one-dimensional means: technology and technique; money. The descending power is also one-dimensional. But semiosis assimilates it all to its logic, with an infinite force and power, relativizing all the desired and proposed one dimensionalities. At this level, mediatization, activated by means that become devices, stand as an open semiosis, in which the media are not interchangeable.

For the transformation of means into devices - it is necessary to go beyond the uses. Usage is a zone of social experimentation. Whenever a new medium is offered on the social scene, several issues stand in the way of sayings and aphorisms. What words can I use on Facebook? Images? How can I show myself? Can I "talk about sex" - publicly or just inbox? Make gossip? Injury? At the same time, the user asks himself: How am I feeling regulated? How is Facebook directing me? The algorithms? Do the forms condition me? Does the symbolic media transform itself according to the means? One parent wonders: How does network experimentation intersect with my father's place? How is perversion - the version of the father, according to Lacan - put in check? These issues linked to experimentation are not dissociated from sayings and maxims about the environment: How does all this relate, for example, to Brazil? How do specific societies use the means, experience them (the Church, the Army, the School, etc.)? Of course, in addition: how do diffuse interactors experience the means?

Practices are already socially stabilized uses. Some practices are hyper coded in some societies (walk dressed, for example). Other, competitively coded (what kind of clothes to wear). Others, without encodings, which allow us to speak in uses, experimentation, tentative encodings, as Braga (2010) speaks. In this perspective, we affirm that the practices constitute themselves in the stabilization of the uses in normative, deontological and functional terms. When this occurs, the process is socially coded. The sphere of practice is the result of socially recognized uses. But practices are also relations of economic, political and cultural power, even if stabilization is constantly changing in the sphere of supply, consumption and uses. In networks, usage does not stabilize like it has occurred with book, press, radio, and television because several layers of new media constantly overlap (new software, new hardware). At the same time, networks rely on various stabilized practices (writing, reading, networking, photography, etc.).

If there is a practice, one wonders from Bourdieu's classic questions of socio-anthropology (Ortiz, 1982) and Lahire (2002), without, however, being necessary to retain his infrastructural theory of practices, that is, that action is the infrastructure of language (a mixture of action philosophy, linguistic and anthropological structuralism). This brings us to the analytic that seeks to identify the habitus. The media habitus would then begin by identifying the semiotic/linguistic/discursive habitus; but to investigate it also asks for the identification of the technical and technological habitus, with its archeology; and the symbolic habitus, singular, that would regulate these spaces of practices. Therefore, the study of practices requires the competence

of the archaeologist to know how to analyze what is the usage of what is practice (habitus).

The third level is appropriations. It is not only the appropriation of technological means and techniques but also of languages and socio-symbolic objects (religion, politics, love, etc.). Appropriation is always expropriation of the social work of production of meaning, consolidated in practices. In this perspective, it is expropriation of the common, carried out according to the logics of the economic, political and cultural markets. There are only devices when there are appropriations. We understand that in this space there is a set of hegemonies and concession - from rhetorical discourses to narratives; from the argumentation to the interlocution of recognition - in which there is an appropriation of the ascending social/semiotic/cultural processes, perceived as central to the very existence of the appropriation of the means.

Appropriations place the impasse on 'pure' interactionist perspectives. Contrary to what a naive interactionist view implies, the contact opened by the uses, practices, and appropriations of the means is not between equals. First, because it is not just about connected individuals, as proposed by several authors. There are not exactly individuals here. The term actor, much used in research on mediatization, also has its debts - the same as the interactionism that nicknamed it. If there are, in relation to the semiotic/technical/discursive means, usages that allow us to use this concept, there are layers of practices to be investigated in empirical research, geologically overlapping, which demands us to speak of structured structures that are structuring. Faced with these layers, the actor does not only respond to the immediate context, but is attached to the mediate, historical and social context in which it is inserted. On the other hand, this individual actor is interacting with means that are appropriated by organizations and institutions, which further reduces their space of freedom. At the same time, as the means are constantly being invested with new layers, in which there are no contracts, codes, and defined practices, there emerges a process of usages, tentative practices, and uncertain appropriations.

Analogously, to understand the transformation of correlations between practice and uses, one can imagine such a situation: when using the smoke, tribes are confronted with a situation in which shades of smoke, densities, movements before the air permanently disrupt known fumes. This is the disruptive process. Interactors are struggling to code this. But others arise, and so on, causing damage to the symbolic constituted as a process of communication in the fluxes between Ecclesia, Agora, and Oikos, favoring the proliferation of imaginary, often ghostly, that feedback processes of uncertainty and indetermination (and, in the sphere of Oikos, the fear).

In this perspective, the classic contradiction between the logic of the community - a space of participation, of gratuity, of generosity, of gift, in the form of present, of hospitality, of rendering services - that is counterpower, resistance, lack of values, norms and beliefs of belonging, and the market logic where economic, cultural or political profitability prevails. This contradiction, however, is subsumed by another - transversal: the constitution of social values of the community and/or economic va-

lues of capitals (cultural, political and economic) is undermined by the suspension of practices, social questioning of the media habitus, by the exacerbation of practices, producing conjuncture of symbolic crisis in general.

This complex matrix of appropriations, expropriations, and resistance still has the State, a place that should condense the symbols at stake, to define its place of political regulation between community and market. But this is in crisis because its sources (the communities constituted in the space of the Oikos and the institutions linked to Ecclesia) are in continuous metamorphosis.

### 3.1. *The construction of ambient circuits*

The circuits and environments constituted from the interactions between the agents and institutions, according to logics of uses, practices, and appropriations, only exist ad hoc, and, in this sense, in an unpredictable way. They are configured by the interactions, even if they are crossed by the field of forces designated by the practices and tentative appropriations. We can, in this sense, speculate that the constituent circuits are unstable, indeterminate, uncertain, permeable to disruption, but also to regulation and new intelligibility. This has been our perspective of research, referring to the concept of environment and ambiance. If the environment refers to the social/semiotic/technical process in which the objects are visible, the ambiance refers to the emotional and energetic flows that lie beyond the observable paths and their traces.

We define the circuit environment with the set of means objects triggered in the interactions between media/mediatized institutions and actors around a dilemma, impasse, agonistic, degenerate or regenerative conflicts, in the constitution of nowadays social symbolic Agorae or deconstruction of the symbolic constituted. In socially constructed circuit environments, there are transformations of discourses, codes, and languages. In them, the uses are prevalent.

In the end, the ambient circuits are not appropriable, and the practices are more unstable. In them, appropriations and practices are questioned, as new individuals, mediated and mediatized institutions are in interaction, in encounters never before existing, forming now unpredictable and unknown Agorae, opening up a space of uncertainty and indetermination, arising from disruptive processes derivative of the accelerated semiotic differentiation. Many babels are constituted, situating energy and emotional processes often impossible to the attempts of the constitution of Ecclesia by media/mediatized institutions, and Interagents.

In this sense, Agorae are complex, multifaceted spaces, bringing together logics of economic, cultural, and political institutions, together with specific institutions, and specialist agents of the market and without the market - which, however, are central to the construction of this spaces/markets of everything.

In this spaces/markets of everything, especially mediatized institutions have strategies of configuration of specific circuits environments, with circulatory devices that refer to the flow that emerges from the Oikoi and Agorae, often constituting

with success, others with absolute failure, their Ecclesiae - with its audiences, its specialists, its editorial rules, producing new discursive formations, adapted to the media objects in networks. Media institutions, on the other hand, have been observed in their adaptive efforts, not yet stabilized (we speak here of television, journalism, and radio), to this new spaces/markets of everything that we call Agora.

#### **4. Three central operations of circulation**

The question is: what is the social logic that moves the means objects in the constitution of the specific (Ecclesiae activated) and generic (spaces of all) markets? The propositions follow the clues of a semantic operator: circulation. Three exercises will be done in this perspective:

- a) the socio-anthropological exercise;
- b) the discursive;
- c) that one founded by the epistemologies of mediatization.

This third party will already be present in the previous two.

The reflexive anthropological exercise, in our perception, must begin with Marx. For Marx, what defines the process of valorization of capital is not production, nor consumption. It is true that values of the use (of material goods) and values of exchange (appropriation that generates value) are central in Marx, as well as forms of production (of values of the use) and modes of production (of exchange values). But, in our reading, what is central is circulation. Why? Because it is the circulation that drives the transit from usages to appropriations. This is our argument about circulation, presented in three starting hypotheses. By analogy, neither production nor reception would define what communication is in the media process. Here we follow Marx's triad when he approaches the circulation of capital. There are three operations carried out in the circulation process: usage, productive investment and work for the recognition.

##### **a. Usage in the space of the market of everything**

An individual is in the market of media means objects. This is the level of preliminary access. Not all are in all minimarkets (for example, not everyone accesses Netflix). He needs to have economic, cultural and political access to these media means objects. Without these resources, it is not possible the conversion investment of its capitals (cultural, economic and political) into media means objects. Of course, this access is differentiated in the history of the media. Access formats are not the same during the historical period of the book, print newspaper, radio, and television.

This access conversion is more complex in network time. In networks, the individual user accesses a means object of production that does not belong to him. He produces in a format defined by others. Facebook, for example, is private property industry. As private property, its production follows the classic model of social rela-

tions in capitalism. But the individual, who accesses it, in a "gratuitous and free" way, produces without remuneration, filling the means object of content. For him, it is an individual activity, a subjectively individual one.

In order to understand this digital medium, it is central to define what type of product the private industrial property offers. It is no longer the content (that allowed to analyze the means like being cultural industry – Frankfurt School of theorists – or economy of the symbolic goods – Bourdieu); nor the documentation and information like Google, which already belongs to the digital; and yes, interactions, where the contents and organization of the information are activated in the interface between actions of the individuals and logics of the forms. This type of product is central to the understanding of this type of means object.

What's new? In the first place, even if it reproduces socio-communicative relations of production of the preceding printed, electronic and digital media, the means objects whose products are the very offerings of interaction spaces, has the capacity to absorb the participation of millions, on a planetary scale, in the production of content and interactions. Never has a means object met this force before. And, for the first time in history, a capitalist enterprise operates production with more than one billion individuals.

If we consider that the audience and the constitution of public is one of the central categories of the media, there is a power greater than all previous ones, including Google itself (which is an organizer of information and documents)<sup>3</sup>. This grouping of digital media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google, among others) is already hegemonic for its power to capture users and create consumer groups, which are also producers. That is why we have a productive reception there. The reception, located in *Oikos*, is not a good category to analyze the media processes today. The emotions and energies of reception, characterized by Aristotle's rhetoric to contemporary theories of reception, are now in the ambient circuits driven by the interactions between media and individuals.

In digital media in networks, a certain technology is not just a media means objects. There are many means objects that comprise, for example, a cell phone, many of which are for communicational interactions and include more than one media communication. Among the latter, we can connect Facebook, Waze, Instagram ... The usage of these means requires specific cultural, economic and political capitals. Cultural capitals cover language, but not only. It also interposes the skills of using technology and technique. The economic conditions do not refer only to the purchase of the cell phone, but also to its cost of use, etc. Policies refer to political relations in society, which define the effective possibilities of usage (censorship, repression, restrictive laws, etc.).

---

<sup>3</sup> See the chapter by Bernard Miège (Miège, 2016).

A recent example may be Burmese. The title of the article by Pedro Guerreiro is "The country that arrived late to the party". In the 'eye' of the story, the journalist points out: "In Burma, millions of people surf the Internet for the first time. Without previous experience, they are easy victims of extremist propagandists and a penal code inherited from the dictatorship."<sup>4</sup> Burma, therefore, enters, years after Brazil, in the field of usages. How long will it take to generate specific practices? I also remember another experience, that of Morocco. In interactions with Moroccans, I always requested the Facebook 'address' and e-mails. All very kind, they always provided this information. But how many responded to 'friendship' invitations on the Facebook or sent e-mails? Only the members of the academic community. We have, therefore, transversalities to what I call historical media formations and specificities according to the logic of Ecclesias.

It is in this sense that it is pertinent to discuss the process of constituted social relations and valorization triggered from the accesses, uses, practices, and appropriations of the media means objects. The social relations constituted are not only those established among the users of networks. There is also another, fundamental and substantial one, which is the relationship of these users with these media as means of content production based on individual, gratuitous relations, fueled by the synergy and emotionality of the interactions. However, just as in the case of the proletariat and wage labor, this user is confronted with these means as someone else's property, which he can use without paying (more correct it is to say: work without receiving), recovering here the gratuitous access to the means television and radio before the closed channels, but becoming, in use, producer of contents and circuits of interactions.

The distribution of the media is derived from these first established relations: billions of users producing content, being documented and information processed, feeding the machine of means available, shaping a culture of participation and gratuity, but appropriated in the centers that produce them; endless expansion of spaces of interaction as a noble product of the new media, conditioning other uses and practices of other media (for example, networks agency newspapers nowadays).

For these new media to be installed, economic, political and cultural conditions are required. Political society must be atomized, fragmented, individualized, which has been largely done in Western consumer societies, fueled by television media; the economy must offer basic conditions of access, even with technological and technical restrictions; culture must be sufficiently mediatized to cope with the disruptive, regulatory processes, and the new social intelligibility that emerges.

b. The productive reception

One of the central concepts of the circulation of capital is productive consumption, characterized as a consumption that enters the production of goods. By analo-

---

<sup>4</sup> See in <http://publico.uol.com.br/tecnologia/noticia/o-pais-que-chegou-tarde-a-festa-1766385>

gy, productive consumption implies consuming means objects for the production of means objects, realized in semiotic, technical, technological and symbolic attempts.

This is the second operation of circulation: productive consumption. The assumption is that this productive consumption generates value. Something must be added to the original value. This something, however, is not transparent. It covers, in our perspective, two additional values: the values of usage of the means objects and the socio-symbolic values. The confluence between these two values produces a series of diversified interactional processes.

We exemplify with the cell phone. The value of usage of the mobile phone is varied: phone, mobile media to access documentation, and interaction in Facebook, Waze, Instagram, etc. There are diversified interacting uses. In general, users activate these possibilities in the context of certain technical and technological limits, a field of possibility, freedom, restricted. There is a change in the value of usage of the technique in the cases of technological creation communities. An example can be seen in the study of Jacques (2016) when analyzing games (User-generated content as a strategy in the digital gaming industry: the experience of game Gun 3).

In the sphere of values of use, there is the great expansion, therefore, of the means media usage as an object of consumption, in itself; of places of access to content offered - what transforms the means into networks of replication of the previous means, where the content supply occurs; the expansion of social interactions mediated as values of the use. This expansion of usage values leverages content production, which refers to the uses of language. Here, the field of possibilities is certainly greater than the former, the digital and network technologies and techniques. Adding usages in this second dimension has produced novelties in uses: the cellular as a means object of capture, of recordings of ongoing social events, of distribution in networks, integrating with digital networks, producing unpredictable semiotic irruptions, etc.

Usages may be for insertion of Oikos in the Agora (a kiss, a selfie, wine being tasted, an organized crime squad, weapons or pets) or specific Ecclesiae (an employee who punched in and does not appear; a badly done surgery; a crazed police officer repressing any offender; etc.).

However, the more the use of networks by individuals expands, the more they strengthen themselves as routers resulting from other means of production (television resulting in networks, networks resulting from television, print on networks), a relationship which is not univocal but rather two-way, fed by individual and collective actions, developed in the business or gratuitous way. Capitalism has never been so deeply nourished by 'free enterprise'. It is not just freedom of consumption or free enterprise in the ownership of the means of production of material and symbolic products. Now it is discussed the freedom of users, to accomplish the productive consumption of the means media that, in this way, become devices of a globalized agency, of individuals who imagine themselves freely connected.

Different from this dimension of use value are the symbolic values triggered. These are not defined by the use that the individual makes. The symbolic value is social, built in the interactions in the public space of all, and can, by this way, be even of dissolution of the symbolic. In this sphere, values can be degenerative, and the socio-semiotic analysis of the circulatory processes may indicate that trends are constructed in the interactions from the applied value of the uses. Example: I can use Waze to fool the "safe ballad". It is an instrumental use. Derivative: it is added to the society, the ambiance, this gesture and its ethics. Therefore, these seconds are necessarily interactional and social, but when we speak of the symbolic that is constructed in the interactions, we are talking about an ambiance (Gomes, 2011), greater than the specific uses, that overlaps ethically, emotionally and energetically with specificities.

c. The return to the market: the problem of recognition

Many media objects are 'drawn out' from Oikos, in the form of languages, codes, images, etc. This withdrawal is not free. It involves negotiations, political tensions in the sphere of privacy, affinities with cultural bids, including economic risks. Others are removed from the specific symbolic markets (fields) constituted by Ecclesiae.

Individuals can be free-lancers, professional or amateur. They are the ones who act in these markets and transport the means objects to the agora, to the private worlds or to the Ecclesiae. But they do so only in certain cultural, economic, and political conditions, as we have pointed out above. This is the first movement of circulation. It is a social movement. It is true that algorithms can also remove, withdraw, deposit and transfer various means objects. Just like banks, hackers, viruses, etc. But, there, it is not information. They are signs, which transferred open disruptive semiotic processes. For example, a private image transformed into a public image.

Even algorithms are means objects built by other individuals who have very specific cultural, economic, and political conditions: they are, by analogy, the result of media capitalists, even when we speak of hackers (whether privateers or pirates). The algorithms have the ability to build means objects with redoubled power, with overwhelming force to access, move and reallocate the means objects available in the marketplace. In general, individuals have reduced cultural, economic, and political capacity for means object agency. This reduced capacity is not only linked to individual characteristics. These characteristics are defined by immersions of these individuals in mercantile spaces, Agorae, and Ecclesiae also specific, with their powers of manipulation of the means objects.

The focus of these early circulation operations is not the displacement, transfer, withdrawals or deposits of means objects in general. The focus is what is brought to the Agora, coming from where it comes. From the Oikos, when the individual puts a picture on his Facebook, especially when it leaks in the marketplace of everything, disruptively. From Ecclesiae, example: when the founder of the WikiLeaks website, Julian Assange, offers in the marketplace of everything secret information of the



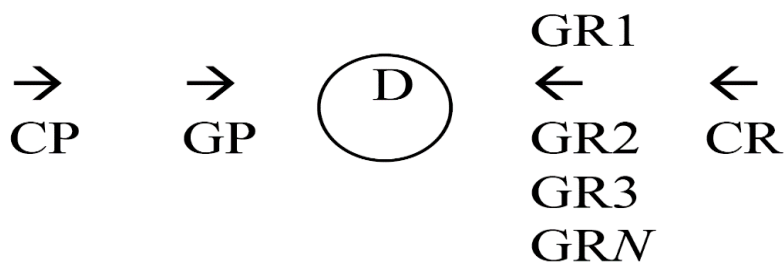
American State. This does not exclude the idea that these processes are often linked to two other, strong ones, in the present moment: the displacements of the means objects to the organizational/institutional spaces or to the private spaces of the Oikos, feeding them. An exercise to be done is to analyze the various forms of these first operations. What is taken to the marketplace of everything? Is everything possible?

But to realize the generation of value, first, it must be recognized as means objects as a value of the use. In this perspective, the question of the recognition of the means object added to the market of everything becomes central but unfolded. On the one hand, there is recognition of a value of the use of the means object. But immediately, not before, not after, it must be recognized as a socio-symbolic value. This second recognition is central to thinking about communication in network times.

There are several types of tensions between the two recognitions and they define, not only the circulatory processes of the means objects as values of the use, but also their insertions in the social symbolic constituted, including new symbolic attempts.

### 5. Questioning referrals: the recognition problem

The third operation is to perform the mediated interactions. We start, by analogy, from Marx's diagrams to think about it. But they are already in Verón (Boutaud & Verón, E., 2007), in his empirical investigations and his diagrams on the circulation. In short, this researcher proposes a scheme like this:



**Figure 1.** *The discursive media circulation* (Verón, 2007, p. 3)

In a more recent article, the scheme is described as follows:

Si partimos, en el curso de una investigación, de un conjunto de discursos tomado como “corpus” (D), éste puede ser encarado como una configuración de superficies discursivas constituidas por opera-

ciones que reenvían a una gramática de producción (GP), la cual se explica a su vez por un conjunto de condiciones de producción (CP). Si la reconstitución de una GP puede ser considerada como un trabajo descriptivo, de identificación de invariantes operatorias identificadas en el conjunto D de superficies discursivas, la GP, una vez caracterizada, permite definir a D como una clase de discurso: es el caso de una GP como contrato de lectura de un medio de prensa, por ejemplo. Lo que nos interesa aquí es subrayar el hecho de que si el análisis nos permite articular la clase D de discurso a una gramática de producción dada, las propiedades de D así descritas no nos autorizan a inferir los “efectos” de esta clase de discurso en recepción: la clase D de discurso está sometida, en recepción, a una pluralidad de “lecturas” o de interpretaciones, que designamos como gramáticas de reconocimiento (GR) de D, y que reenvían a su vez a condiciones de reconocimiento (CR) determinadas. Tenemos allí una prueba capital sobre la no-linealidad de la comunicación, que resulta del estudio empírico de la circulación discursiva. (Boutaud & Véron, 2007, p. 3).

In the matrix related to mass culture / cultural industry, it was worth mentioning that a grouping of recipient individuals (1 to "n") was distributed in "m" recognition grammars corresponding to one or more production grammars.

$$GP = \begin{bmatrix} gr_{11} & gr_{12} & gr_{13} & \dots & gr_{1n} \\ gr_{21} & gr_{22} & 23 & \dots & 2n \\ gr_{31} & 32 & 33 & \dots & 3n \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ gr_{m1} & m2 & m3 & \dots & gr_{mn} \end{bmatrix}$$

**Figure 2 .** Matrix of interactions in media processes hegemonized by the cultural industry  
(Source: the author)

However, contemporary environments circuits – the digital networks –, are marked by complex differentiations of the processes of signification. In this new configuration, there is an explosion of the gaps, that accelerates the upward disruptive process and the constitution of uncertainty environments, due to the absence of media and mediatizes institutions, and actors, that are the reference of the interactions. The explosion of gaps, which are potentially fueled by the differentiation of signification processes, only takes place in a scenario in which media and mediatized pro-

cesses – in the digital networks – enable each of the individual actors to become GP producers, what allows us to infer the possibility that a corpus can be analyzed as  $M \times N$  production grammars, in which the media institutions are one of the possible matrices, no longer determinant, as the concept of cultural industry has suggested.

In this scenario, the disruption would begin to deal with the tentative processes of intelligibility and the attempts to regulate the interactions. The imbalance would dominate the processes, requiring, therefore, the algorithms as systems of regulation.

In this context, there are competing propositions:

a) the gaps become an anthological question since epistemes do not produce the logical, rational or symbolic closures suggested by modernity; nor the technical and technological regulations suggested as ideology offer resolution to the problem of intelligibility;

b) proposals that acknowledge that the gaps or decalage have as social/historical results, in new contexts of the media processes, the explosion and fragmentation of the meanings, but, on the other hand, they have propitiated the constitution of new symbolic (ternary) scenarios, more complex than those hitherto shaped by the experience of the species.

In this sense, we suggest that the problem of recognition, which unfolds in social/symbolic conflicts, is central to understanding interactions in the processes of mediatization, in the context of the environment and ambiances in digital networks. It is no longer a question of the recognition of the ancient media appropriated as a cultural industry (printed newspaper, radio, and television), but of the processes of recognition in the flows formed in the interactions between Ecclesia, Agora, and Oikos. Thus, we get to Honnet's (2004) problematic, the issue of the mutual recognition as a key to the possibilities of communication in contemporaneous, complex societies derived from mediatization processes.

## Références

- Boutaud, J., Véron, E. (2007). *Sémiotique ouverte: Itinéraires sémiotiques en communication*. Paris: Lavoisier, Hermès Science.
- Braga, J.L. (2006). *A sociedade enfrenta sua mídia - dispositivos sociais de crítica midiática*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Paulus, v. 1.
- Braga, J.L. (2010). *Nem rara, nem ausente – tentativa*. Matrizes, USP (impresso), v. 4, p. 65-81.
- Bratosin, S. (2014). Church in the public sphere: production of meaning between rational and irrational, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideology*, Vol. 13, no. 38, p. 3-20.
- Fausto Neto, A. (2016). Dos circuito à sentença: o impeachment de Dilma Rousseff no ambiente da circulação midiaticizada. *INMEDIACIONES*. Vol. 11/97-111.

- Gomes, P. G (2011). Da sociedade dos mídias à mediatização da sociedade. IHU On-Line, UNISINOS (impresso), v. 357 (p. 22-24).
- Honnet, A. (2003). A luta pelo reconhecimento. A gramática Moral dos conflitos sociais. São Paulo: Editora 33.
- Jacques, E. (2016). User-generated Content como estratégia na indústria de jogos digitais: a experiência do jogo Arma 3. In: Flichy, P. (Org.) Ferreira, J. Org.), Amaral, A. (Org.). Redes digitais: um mundo para os amadores. Novas relações entre mediadores, mediações e mediatizações (p. 147-164). 1. Ed. Santa Maria: Facos - Ufsm.
- Lahire, B. (2002). O homem plural. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- Luhman, Niklas (2005). A realidade dos meios de comunicação. São Paulo: Paulus.
- Miège, B. (Org.), Ferreira, J. (Org.), Fausto Neto, A. (Org.) ; Bittencourt, M.C.J.A. (Org.) (2016). Operações de mediatização: das máscaras da convergência às críticas ao tecnodeterminismo. 1. Ed. Santa Maria: Facos-Ufsm.
- Ortiz, R. (org.). (1983). Bourdieu – Sociologia. São Paulo: Ática. Coleção Grandes Cientistas Sociais, vol. 39.
- Proulx, S. (2016). As pesquisas norte-americanas sobre a comunicação: a institucionalização de um campo de estudo. Revista Questões Transversais, v. 2, número 4.
- Rosa, A.P. (2016). Imagens em proliferação: a circulação como espaço de valor. IN: Anais do V Colóquio de Semiótica das Mídias. Vol5. Nº 1. Japaratinga: UFAL.
- Véron, E. (1997) Esquema para el análisis de la mediatización. Lima: Felafacs. (Diálogos de la comunicación, n. 48).